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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: TWO PALESTINIANS KILLED, SEVENTEEN ARRESTED IN WEST BANK: JULY 8-11, 2005 (1800 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint Embassy/ConGen cable.

11. (SBU) Summary: In the West Bank, an Israeli security guard on July 8 shot and killed a Palestinian teenager near Bayt Liqya, west of Ramallah. The Israeli Police are reportedly conducting an investigation of the incident. A second Palestinian teenager on July 10 died from bullet wounds received during an exchange of gunfire between the IDF and al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades militants in Nablus last week. An IDF soldier on July 10 sustained light injuries when an explosive device detonated near Shillo settlement, north of Ramallah. A total of 17 Palestinians were arrested during various IDF operations July 8-11. In the Gaza Strip, three IDF soldiers sustained light injuries when an explosive device detonated north of the Sufa Crossing. UNRWA reported that on July 9 nine Palestinians sustained injuries after a mortar that militants attempted to fire at an Israeli target exploded prematurely. Palestinians also fired mortar, rocket, and automatic gunfire at Israeli targets July 8-11, but no injuries were reported in those attacks. End summary.

West Bank

12. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: An Israeli security guard on July 8 shot and killed a Palestinian teenager near Bayt Liqya, west of Ramallah. The security guard told Israeli police that he fired his weapon at a group of Palestinians who had thrown stones at security personnel guarding the construction of the separation barrier. Palestinian witnesses claimed that the dead Palestinian did not participate in the stoning incident. The Israeli security guard has been placed under house arrest pending further investigation.

-- Death: A Palestinian teenager on July 10 died from bullet wounds he received during an exchange of gunfire between IDF soldiers and members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in Nablus last week.

-- Clashes/injuries: Palestinian and Israeli protesters threw a Molotov cocktail at IDF soldiers during a July 8 demonstration opposing the construction of the separation barrier near the Bil'in village, west of Ramallah. At least 20 protesters were injured during the clashes by IDF rubber bullets and tear gas inhalation. The IDF also arrested five protesters. (See "arrests")

-- Clashes/injuries: Palestinians on July 9 commenced a series of demonstrations in the West Bank to protest the construction of the separation barrier. At least 20 protesters experienced tear gas inhalation during clashes with the IDF in Azzun village, west of Qalqilya.

-- Injury: An IDF soldier on July 10 sustained light injuries when an explosive device detonated near Shillo settlement, north of Ramallah.

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen on July 10 fired gunshots at an Israeli vehicle north of Ramallah. There were no reported injuries from this incident.

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen in Jenin on July 10 fired upon an Israeli settlement inside Green-Line Israel, resulting in damage to two homes. There were no reported injuries from this incident.

13. (SBU) ARRESTS/SECURITY:

-- Arrests: The IDF on July 9 arrested five protesters during a demonstration against the construction of the separation barrier near Bil'in village, west of Ramallah.

-- Arrests: The IDF on July 9 arrested six Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) activists in Hebron.

-- Arrests: The IDF the evening of July 10 arrested two Palestinian youths near Azzun village, est of Qalqilya, who

were suspected of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles.

-- Incursions: The IDF on July 10 conducted raids in several Palestinian villages in the Nablus, Hebron, and Tulkarm districts to search for wanted activists. In Husan village, west of Bethlehem, the IDF closed all entrances and placed IDF checkpoints at all entrance into the village.

-- Incursion/Arrests: The IDF on July 10 entered the West Bank city of Qalqilya and arrested three Fatah activists. The IDF withdrew from the city of the morning of July 11.

-- The IDF on July 10 arrested one Palestinian in Hebron on suspicion of stealing an Israeli vehicle.

14. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member Marwan Kanafani (Gaza City) resigned from the PLC July 10 to protest postponement of legislative elections and ongoing instability in Palestinian-controlled areas.

-- According to Palestinian and Israeli press reports, Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmud Abbas said July 10 that he had reached an agreement with Hamas and PIJ representatives in Damascus that the National Islamic Forces, a Gaza-based umbrella organization composed of various Palestinian factions, would coordinate with the PA on the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Gaza

15. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: According to the IDF, three of its soldiers were lightly injured July 8 at 1520 hours when an explosive device went off approximately one kilometer north of the Sufa Crossing. According to UNRWA, two Palestinian youths were injured near the settlement of Neve Dekalim July 9-10 after the IDF opened fire at some youth near the settlement.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that on July 9, Palestinian militants' attempt to fire a mortar from the Al Amal project failed and exploded in place, resulting in nine injuries.

-- Injuries: According to Israeli media sources, Palestinian militants fired a rocket at construction workers in the Philadelphi Strip July 11, lightly wounding one Israeli civilian worker.

-- Mortars: The IDF reported that on July 8, mortar shells were fired at civilians in Netzarim settlement and about seven kilometers west of Morag settlement. No injuries resulted.

-- Mortars: On July 9, according to the IDF, two mortar shells were fired at IDF soldiers near Khan Yunis. No injuries were reported. According to the IDF, a mortar shell was fired July 9 at IDF soldiers near Neve Dekalim settlement. No injuries resulted. Also on July 9, the IDF reported that a mortar shell was fired at IDF soldiers about two kilometers south of the Erez Crossing. No injuries resulted.

-- Mortars/rockets: A Qassam rocket was fired July 9 at Israeli civilians in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, with no injuries reported. The IDF also reported that on July 10, a mortar shell was fired at IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians in the vicinity of Nahal Oz Crossing. No injuries resulted.

-- Mortars: The IDF reported that two mortar shells were fired at Israeli civilians and IDF soldiers near Neve Dekalim Village July 10. No injuries were reported.

-- Mortars: Two mortars were fired at IDF soldiers July 10 near Khan Yunis, without resulting injuries.

-- Mortars: The IDF reported three mortar shell incidents late July 10: one fired at IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians near Netzarim, one fired at IDF soldiers near Kissufim crossing, and one fired at Israeli civilians and IDF soldiers near Neve Dekalim. No injuries were reported from these incidents.

-- Anti-Tank Missile: The IDF reported that an anti-tank missile was fired at IDF soldiers near Neve Dekalim July 8.

-- Explosive devices: Aside from the explosive device noted under "injuries," the IDF reported that an explosive device was identified July 10 near Israeli civilians at the Dugit settlement.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported four shootings occurred July 8, all targeting IDF soldiers: two near Khan Yunis, one near the Sufa Crossing and one near Neve Dekalim.

-- Shootings: According to the IDF, eight shootings aimed at IDF targets occurred July 9: one near Neve Dekalim, one south of the Sufa Crossing, one north of the Kissufim Crossing, one near the Biri Crossing, and three near Rafah.

-- Shootings: UNRWA reported July 9 that IDF soldiers opened fire at youngsters near the settlement of Neve Dekalim, resulting in two injuries, including an 11 year old who was shot in the neck.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported its soldiers were targeted in shooting incidents July 10, with no resulting injuries: two near Erez Crossing, one near Khan Yunis, and one west of Rafah.

-- Shootings: Israeli civilians were targeted in a shooting July 10, according to the IDF, west of Neve Dekalim. No injuries were reported.

-- Shootings: Four shootings aimed at IDF targets in the early hours of July 11 were reported by the IDF: three near Khan Yunis and one near Rafiah Yam settlement. No injuries were reported.

-- Incursions: UNRWA reported that the IDF carried out a small incursion and search operation east of the Bureij refugee camp July 9.

16. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open July 9-11, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Erez Crossing was open July 9-11, and 4,728 laborers and 423 merchants crossed into Israel July 11.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was open July 9-11, and 580 laborers entered the zone July 11.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers July 9-11, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open July 9-11.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for arrivals and departures July 9-11.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed July 9-11. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi, except males aged 16-30.

17. (SBU) Political Developments:

-- The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported July 11 that there have been "an unusually large number of shooting incidents" July 10 in Gaza, "and an increase has been evident there in recent days."

-- According to Ha'aretz "Palestinian sources announced...the appointment of General Juma Ghali, a senior officer of the presidential security guard, as commander of the new force set up by the PA to guard the Gaza settlements after their evacuation...."

-- Israeli radio reported that there are an increased number of reports of violence between armed Palestinian groups in recent days. UNRWA reported two violent disputes, one that erupted July 9 between two families at its Rimaal Health Center, which resulted in injuries, and one July 10 between two families in Jabalia Village, in which a house was burned.
PEARCE